



The Answer Is...

Clickers. Audio response systems. Student response systems (SRSs). Whatever you call them, wireless response systems, which allow students to answer questions by means of handheld response pads, are the answer to some teachers' prayers. SRSs take the guesswork out of instruction, helping teachers see exactly who understands the material and who doesn't. But don't let us sell you on these systems; let the proponents speak for themselves.

By Ellen Ullman

	CLEVELAND CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL CLEVELAND, TENN. 	HURST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL HURST, TEXAS 
WHAT DO YOU USE?	QWIZDOM WWW.QWIZDOM.COM	SMART RESPONSE SMARTTECH.COM
WHY DID YOU BUY THIS PRODUCT?	<p>"I had seen similar products at a conference and thought they could be useful," says Barbie Buckner, who teaches science at Cleveland (Tenn.) Central High School. "Students often give me the feedback I want, but Qwizdom shows me what the kids don't understand, so I don't have to re-teach entire lessons."</p>	<p>"We wanted to get instant data and instant feedback," says Amanda Hatcher, who teaches math and pre-AP math at Hurst Junior High School.</p>
BEST FEATURES	<p>Buckner, who has used Qwizdom clickers for five years, loves the new Q6 because "it was designed with cell phones and texting in mind. The Q6 lets us use symbols, which is very important for math and science."</p>	<p>"It grades everything for me!" Hatcher says. She also likes it that it works well with SMART Notebook and lets students see either their results or the entire class's results.</p>
I GET COMPLAINTS ABOUT...	<p>"I had the Q6 before it was released, and it got stuck sometimes. The minor software glitches were taken care of for the release in May."</p>	<p>"It crashes pretty often, which is frustrating."</p>
HOW ARE TEACHERS USING THEM?	<p>Buckner uses them to give tests and quizzes, to check homework, and to ask questions on the fly. "When I'm giving a lecture, I can use my Q7 [wireless tablet] to click one button and prepare a question. I can get feedback for myself or on the big screen. The kids love watching the graph change."</p>	<p>Hatcher uses them "all day, every day." Her students come in, pick up a remote, and answer warm-up questions for 10 minutes. She goes over their results and does a mini lesson during which the students use their remotes to answer more questions.</p>
WHAT KINDS OF RESULTS HAVE TEACHERS SEEN?	<p>Buckner has covered more material in her chemistry classes since she started using clickers. "No more wasting time re-teaching what the students don't need."</p>	<p>"My first year at the school, only 72 percent of my students passed. Since we got SMART Response three years ago, our student scores have improved every year. Now our passing rate is in the 90s."</p>
WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SCHOOLS THAT DON'T HAVE THEM?	<p>"Do whatever it takes to get them. Today's students are driven by immediate feedback and hands-on touch-and-click. It will revolutionize your classroom."</p>	<p>"You'd better hope your teachers are fast graders, because they will never catch up. I know where my students are and can fix any misunderstandings right away."</p>

CITRUS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD CITRUS COUNTY, FLORIDA



WHAT DO YOU USE?

TURNINGPOINT RESPONSECARD XR SYSTEM
WWW.TURNINGTECHNOLOGIES.COM

WHY DID YOU BUY THIS PRODUCT?

John Mullen, program specialist for the Citrus County (Fla.) School Board, began exploring SRSs about two years ago. "Florida began doing performance pay, and we would have more than 50,000 tests to grade every six weeks. We needed something economical and environmentally friendly."

BEST FEATURES

Ease of use is at the top. "Teachers like the versatility; they can use it with PowerPoint, with TurningPoint's software, or with other software." So far he hasn't had any technical problems.

I GET COMPLAINTS ABOUT...

"Nothing. No negatives yet, although getting it into the high school is like pulling teeth. That's more of a personnel than a tech problem, though."

HOW ARE TEACHERS USING THEM?

This was the first year of full implementation. "We've created mini assessments and time lines for all subject areas. The assessments consist of five to 10 questions on a particular benchmark; they are available for teachers to use, or teachers can make their own and share them."

WHAT KINDS OF RESULTS HAVE TEACHERS SEEN?

"The results are outstanding. All students are experiencing growth, with the special-education students improving the most." One fifth-grade classroom had not made AYP last year. This year that teacher used the clickers all day long and was the only teacher in her school who had students who qualified for advanced math; nearly 75 percent of her students qualified.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SCHOOLS THAT DON'T HAVE THEM?

Mullen suggests providing resources so teachers can use them immediately. "We did lots of training before Christmas and created games using holiday trivia, then encouraged teachers to take them home and play with their families." He also initially required teachers to show the results of one mini assessment every 10 days, so he knew that the systems weren't sitting on shelves.

HERITAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL DELTONA, FLORIDA



**CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE SYSTEM (CPS)
PULSE EINSTRUCTION**
WWW.EINSTRUCTION.COM

Four years ago, Kristy Kuches was asked to help improve math scores at an elementary school. She came up with several games and hands-on activities but was concerned about filling up an entire year. Then she learned about CPS Pulse. "Once I got a remote, I knew I could do more math and have the whole class engaged," says Kuches, who teaches math at Heritage Middle School.

It gives immediate feedback, and it's anonymous. "The kids learn quickly that if they don't say 'Aw, jeez,' then no one knows who got it wrong." She's also a fan of eInstruction's customer service and says her sales rep goes "above and beyond."

"The Pulse has a texting feature, which is nice, but I wish it had more flexibility. There can be only one right answer between Abe Lincoln, Lincoln, and Abraham Lincoln. If students spell it incorrectly or word it differently, it is considered wrong."

"I use it for everything! I use it to introduce concepts, see who understands, and check their homework. Then I know what to review. I also use it for quizzes and tests. I can easily give four versions of tests, so cheating is nonexistent."

"Because of the anonymity, kids who are quietly suffering don't have to suffer anymore. They know right away if they got it wrong and can see where they messed up when we go over it." Sixty percent of students get correct answers at the start of class; by the end, it is 90 percent or higher.

"Kids today cannot wait 24 hours to get the scores on their paper. To ask them to wait for homework or test results is not how their brains are wired anymore. Teachers who don't use clickers always ask how my students move so far along so quickly."

ST. ANNE SCHOOL
LAGUNA NIGUEL, CALIF.



BARRINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
BARRINGTON, N.H.



WHAT DO YOU USE?	<p>i>CLICKER WWW.IClicker.COM</p>	2KNOW! CLASSROOM RESPONSE SYSTEM RENAISSANCE LEARNING WWW.RENLEARN.COM
WHY DID YOU BUY THIS PRODUCT?	<p>Joe Kemp, systems administrator at St. Anne School used i>clickers in his college marketing class last year and thought that the teachers and students at this K-8 school would benefit from using them. "I got a demo kit from i>clicker, and the teachers loved it," he says. "They wanted to use them to keep students' attention during lessons."</p>	<p>Mary Wilson, who teaches math at Barrington (N.H.) Middle School, received the product as part of a technology grant. "I felt that my students and I could immediately use 2Know," she says.</p>
BEST FEATURES	<p>Ease of use. "There are only two IT people for our school, so we love that i>clicker needs no installation, is easy to use, and requires little if any training," Kemp says. "It caters to a wide range of teachers: The tech-savvy ones can do as much as they want, and the tech-phobic teachers can use it to poll kids during class."</p>	<p>Student engagement. "They especially like it when we use them to play interactive games. They get to be on teams, earn points, and have fun. I love the instantaneousness."</p>
I GET COMPLAINTS ABOUT...	<p>One teacher complained that there aren't downloadable lessons, unlike what other clicker companies provide.</p>	<p>"I wish it weren't so time-consuming. Some kids are a lot slower, and waiting for those children is not the best use of time. It's fine when we're doing skills and drills, but we have to wait for everyone when doing formative assessment or quizzes."</p>
HOW ARE TEACHERS USING THEM?	<p>Most of the teachers embed questions in PowerPoint presentations to check comprehension, but some have started using them with their interactive whiteboards to give quizzes or for pre-assessment. "A first-grade teacher asked students to vote for the name of the class pet."</p>	<p>Wilson uses them for review games, for formative assessment, and to improve math skills. "I use MathFacts in a Flash, which is supplied by Renaissance Learning, as well as my own stuff and our textbook."</p>
WHAT KINDS OF RESULTS HAVE TEACHERS SEEN?	<p>The school hasn't collected data, but teachers say i>clicker helps them teach better because they know what the students understand.</p>	<p>"We have had a lot of positive movement in test scores, but I can't isolate it to just 2Know."</p>
WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SCHOOLS THAT DON'T HAVE THEM?	<p>"Today's kids have so much technology in their lives that to expect them to just sit and pay attention to a teacher talking is unreasonable at best. These will enhance their educational experience."</p>	<p>"There are a lot of clickers to choose from, so make sure kids can put in short answers so you aren't limited to multiple-choice or numeric answers. Buy one that can be used for any subject. It is a great way to get one-on-one technology with kids, and it's fairly inexpensive."</p>

More Response Systems

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Response System
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www.irespond.com

Promethean's Learner Response
Systems
www.prometheanworld.com

QOMO's QIR300 Audience Response
System
www.qomo.com

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